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In Pursuit of "The Good": some provisional reflections on the origins and nature of a university

Academic biography

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Abstract

I wish to do five things in this paper. First, I want to say something about the debate concerning the nature of a university, as prompted by Newman's well-known analysis; second, I hope to show that Newman's vision of the university embodies the idea of the individual and collective "Good" as envisaged by the Greeks; third, I examine some contemporary views of the kind of university education thought to be worthwhile; fourth, I aim to explore MacIntyre's highly critical conception of the modern liberal university as a place of "unconstrained agreement", in contrast to the notion of the modern pre-liberal university as a place of 'constrained agreement'. In doing so, I wish to give an account of his proposal that a university, instead, should be a place of "constrained disagreement" within which students and others are initiated into various arenas of cultural, ideological and curricular competition and conflict. In agreeing, broadly, with MacIntyre's argument, the paper ends on a rather bleak note, echoing Readings' fairly recent and now famous analysis of the modern university as a place "in ruins".

Newman's "Idea of a University"

As is well-known, it was Cardinal Newman who, in the nineteenth century, largely set the tone of the wide-ranging, historical debate concerning the aims and nature of a university. In *The Idea of the University (1927)[i]* there are a number of themes that Newman wished to pursue, as well as principles to be established

and distinctions to be drawn. However, the central argument was connected with what Newman understood to be the two overriding virtues of a university, first, that within a single institution a diverse assemblage of disciplines could be studied purely for their own sakes, and second, that a host of moral and cultural benefits tended to accompany the very study of such disciplines, benefits of an intangible kind that went far beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge and skill. This is the kind of liberal education of which Hirst and Peters were to speak some one hundred years later (Hirst 1965; Peters 1966). The purpose is to initiate students into a world of knowledge, via the established disciplines, so that at some point they may come to understand not only the "third world" of knowledge contained within libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, (Popper 1972:153-163) but the actual or real world with which that knowledge is concerned, and the strange nature of the relationship between the two. For the student, the aim beyond that is the autonomy of thought and practice gained through such study, so that he or she may make up their own mind about the shape and 'form of life' (Wittgenstein 1953: §23) they might consider it worthwhile following.

This is, of course, no small matter, and it is one with which anyone interested in the nature of education, or in the strange and often intangible connections between learning and teaching, should be concerned, for it goes to the heart of what it means to be a person (Langford 1985:165-192) capable of both thinking and acting simultaneously, and whose thought and action takes account of both self and other. In the ancient Greek philosophical sense, making judgements about what it is best to do in any situation requires us to have logical, moral and empirical knowledge of ourselves, others and the extraordinary world which we all inhabit. Without such knowledge, our actions will be forever flawed, and likely to be destructive of both ourselves and of the community of which we are a part. The qualities of mind and character which are essential to the acquisition of such knowledge, are those, according to Newman, laid down by a university education.

> A habit of mind is formed which lasts throughout life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what I ... have ventured to call a philosophical habit. This then I would assign as the special fruit of the education furnished at a University. (Newman 1927:101-02)

These "habits of mind" are a recent echo of the "intellectual virtues", part of that long tradition of virtue ethics originally laid down in Homeric Greece and given a clear voice by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[ii] The overall aim is to strengthen and refine these qualities so that living a life becomes a practical art conferring "blessedness, happiness, prosperity" [iii] on the individual, and consequently on the community within which the individual resides, for the Greeks saw no distinction between the good person and the good citizen; they are one and the same. And this is what is "Good" for oneself, and "Good" for others, the ideas of which are prompted by consideration of *The Good (agathon)*, arguably the most important Greek concept of all, so it is worth our while to reflect a little on this notion, especially in its connection with a university education.

The notion of "The Good"

First, a university education is a "good" in itself. Its pursuit should be for its intrinsic or internal value, not for its extrinsic use. This is not, of course, to say that there are no external "goods" associated with a university education, such as easier progress towards gainful employment, higher social status and so on, but these are very much secondary. Instead the university student should be initiated into a form of life within which the point of education is understood as being for its own sake, and not for the sake of anything else. Classical scholars understood only too well what was meant by this. The notion of a "good" (both public and private) derives its significance from the Platonic ideal of the "Good". And for Plato, (whose *Republic,* arguably the most important text in the history of philosophy which raised all of the relevant intellectual questions

that scholars, in any and every field, have ever since been attempting to address[iv]), the "Good" was the overarching combination of truth, beauty and goodness, the ultimate aim of human knowledge and practical living. Once glimpsed, a person would order and discipline their life in such a way that the pursuit of the Good would supersede the pursuit of anything else. Hence, material wealth, social status, fame, fortune and pleasure would all be downgraded, as their direct pursuit actually impeded progress towards knowledge and understanding of this "miraculously transcendent" prize, which is the "source not only of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also of their being and reality; yet it is not itself that reality, but is beyond it, and superior to it in dignity and power" (509b). It is clear then why Plato should have seen fit to establish what is probably the classic proto-type of the university, the Academy, a philosophical community open to both men and women who acknowledged the lasting value of intellectual inquiry (Beck 1964:227-243; Burnet 1968: 174-187; Cherniss 1945:61-62; Lynch 1972:32-106). Moreover, given Plato's eloquent and quasi-religious description of the Good, it is not too difficult to see why early Christian theology, through the extraordinary efforts of Augustine, annexed Platonic theorizing as a means of providing a philosophical justification for the otherwise ineffable concept of God.

Two millennia later Newman was equally clear about the anti-utilitarian nature of a university education. It gave students and scholars a route to understanding the transcendent value of human existence, and the critical tools to take that understanding into everyday life beyond the hallowed walls of the university. In short, it is about the very shaping of a human being, the development of mind and character, which may sustain the individual person and the collective will through the stresses and strains of life, as well as their peaceful pleasures and contented pursuits. It is hardly surprising then that Derwent Coleridge, ex-Cambridge scholar, high-Anglican priest, and the first Principal of St Mark's College, one of the founding institutions of teacher education and training, should choose to defend the

teaching of ancient texts and languages, especially Latin, with the lines *"Abeunt studia in mores"* (Nicholas 2007: 142). This summary principle of education, 'character through study', penned by Ovid in *Heroides* (XV 83), was later taken as the motto for the combined institution, The College of St Mark & St John, Chelsea, in 1924.

Second, if the overall purpose of a university education is to provide a glimpse of 'the Good', then the university itself must embody the Good, and its community provide the means by which all of the "ultimate and synoptic questions" (Kleinig 1982: 257) can be asked and, at least, partially and provisionally answered; notwithstanding, of course, the fact that there will be many competing and conflicting answers. There will, therefore, have to be a community of scholars, all steeped in their respective disciplines, who are able to conduct a set of serious conversations about their tentative conclusions concerning such questions and answers. As Newman states, the university must therefore be:

> a place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonistic activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. (Newman 1952: 53)

Newman claimed that the kinds of disciplines to be included in a university should be those traditionally studied within the four major faculties: of Law, Medicine, Theology, and, of course, Arts. Many of the new and emerging sciences were to be taught within the faculties of Medicine and Arts, although it is the latter which provides the essential foundation for a full university experience, given its emphasis on the seven *"artes liberals"* (Newman 1852: 53). These seven liberal arts, as most know, were divided into the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and logic), and the *quadrivium*

(arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). Their division and content were first sketched by the sixth century scholar Boethius (Watts 1999: xvii) prior to his long and lyrical reflections in prison, and for whom philosophy became his sole and ultimate consolation.

Some contemporary views

Now, depending upon who we might consult as to a contemporary interpretation of Newman's ideas it is, at least, quite clear that the university curriculum should not be utterly prescribed. However, according to O'Hear, it would be difficult to exclude "grammar, mathematics, history, … geography, poetry and philosophy", and ideally the "physical and social worlds" should be studied through "science and literature respectively" (O'Hear 1988: 16).

O'Hear extends his contemporary account by way of reference to another eloquent defender of the liberal arts curriculum. F. R. Leavis, on lamenting what he saw as the uncritical expansion of university education in the mid to late twentieth century, an expansion geared more to economic goals and utilitarian measures than to individual and collective cultural enrichment, continued the critique set down by Newman, and sought to fashion an argument that would keep alive Newman's idea of the fully educated person emerging from the tradition of competing but complementary academic inquiries. The purpose should be to nurture existing institutions, and to establish, in a considered manner, new institutions which can "bring the various essential kinds of specialist knowledge and training into effective relation with informed general intelligence, humane culture, social conscience and political will" (Leavis 1979:4). The physical and human sciences are therefore necessary, but, given their potential for reductivism, scientism, and technocratic efficiency, they ought to be combined with the arts and humanities in order to provide the richness of human experience that "informed general intelligence" requires. (Leavis in O'Hear 1988:15)

O'Hear, having summarizing the positions of Newman and Leavis respectively, finally argues that, 'a university without the disciplines of history, literature and philosophy cannot be a university, however prestigious an institution it may be' (O'Hear 1988:18). It is an argument that resonates with one that Oakeshott put forward forcefully and lyrically in his famous essay "The voice of poetry in the conversation of mankind", and it is worth quoting at some length what Oakeshott says of education in general:

> As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves.....Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation ... (and) philosophy, (is) the impulse to study the quality and style of each voice. (Oakeshott 1991: 490-91).

These accounts, of course, only serve to demonstrate that, even now, the idea of a university is still indebted to the idea of the medieval university, but it is none the worse for that. Newman, Leavis, Oakeshott, and recently O'Hear all retain notions of a university community, with its liberal arts curriculum and collegial structure, rooted in the medieval period when the great European universities were first established. Oxford and Cambridge, along with their older counterparts, Bologna and Paris, still retain their medieval charm and their medieval seriousness, side by side with their modern sciences and contemporary concerns. And whatever else, absolute seriousness is their chief business.

The importance of theology

Now, given the fact that the core discipline in the medieval period was scholastic theology, it is hardly surprising that a sobering kind of seriousness was their prime concern. For it was generally undisputed that what *really* mattered in the studies of humankind and the world was the nature of eternity. Human souls, bound by bodies, were, according to theological principle and philosophical inquiry, immortal. And if that is the case, then we had better be clear about what it is that the immortal human soul is likely to encounter in eternity, and whether it is possible to do anything about it during this brief period of mortal existence. And so, intellectual studies were necessarily connected with that vast enterprise which sees the finite clashing with the infinite, the mortal facing up to the immortal, and the changeable meeting the changeless. Theology became the crowned queen of the sciences, and philosophy was simply her "handmaid" (Hadot 1995: 107).

Interestingly, this belief partly emerged from a quasi-religious reading and interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in which Aristotle referred to the three principal philosophical inquiries: mathematics, science and theology (102ba). Of these, he claimed theology to be the primary discipline, since knowledge of the divine origins of the cosmos was solely knowledge for its own sake; it had no real practical benefit to the knower. It simply answered an insistent and intriguing question, the answer to which had no useful pay-off. Hence, theology, or first philosophy for Aristotle, is the most useless of all knowledge. That, however, is why it is so highly prized. Only those who seek to know things for their own sake and for no other purpose, value (philosophical) theology, in the way that Aristotle conceived it.

Theology then, for Aristotle, was not connected to a set of sacred texts; it was the product of inquiring into, and reflecting upon the Prime Mover or Uncaused Cause. It was only later, most significantly, but not primarily, through Augustine, in *The City of God,* that theology, at least Christian theology, became indissolubly linked to

the sacred Hebrew and Christian scriptures. And Holy Scripture then became the final arbiter in determining the fate of human beings, and provided the moral horizon for both belief and action. However, as Carr has neatly argued, "it was nevertheless accepted that understanding the Holy Scriptures presupposed a certain amount of secular knowledge. This was provided by the teaching of the celebrated seven liberal arts (*artes liberales*),"(Carr 1997 : 317) the nature of which has already been addressed.[v]

The modern liberal university and "unconstrained agreement"

What does all this tell us, if anything? What it does is to trace the development of the university in terms of its curriculum, its overarching aims, and the ways in which it was conceived both as a living practice and an institutional forum. If we are unaware as to the origins of academic thought and life, then we cannot be surprised if they are denied to us or to future generations. As Santayana famously remarked, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Santayana 1905 : 284). However, what is of particular significance is what the gradual changes in the development of the university mean for us today.

MacIntyre has lamented the rise of what he sees as the modern liberal university which assumes a kind of neutrality on all matters moral and intellectual, theoretical and practical. It does so because it assumes that there is what he calls '*unconstrained agreement*' about the nature of academic inquiry (MacIntyre 1990: 230-231). In a postmodern academic world it is tacitly understood that not only competing ideologies will vie for supremacy, but that competing traditions and disciplines will construct and defend different conceptions of "truth", for there is no ultimate truth now to be had. Hence, fundamental conflicts and disagreements about the nature and purpose of inquiry, about organizational roles and structure, and about competing forms of life are all unconstrained, because there is now no final arbiter about what we should choose to pursue, the manner of the choosing, and the

means of its pursuit. Hence, and this is, effectively, MacIntyre's point, we all simply and perpetually agree to disagree, and there is an end to it. And so, the secular and the religious, the managerial and the collegial, the commercial and the academic, all sit side by side in supposed easy compatibility. For ultimately, there is nothing worth really defending, and nothing that cannot be compromised. One position is as good as another, and if that is the case, then any position will do, as it doesn't really matter all that much. This is what Markham (2004) refers to as the "hotel" model of the university, a place where there are no overarching values or purposes beyond merely providing a neutral space for the exploration and pursuit of any kind of activity or form of life. All differences can be sublimated and all are able to conduct their academic tasks in a business-like fashion. There are some agreed "codes of practice" which (at least, on paper) govern equality (of race, age and gender) and resist harassment, but beyond that certain belief systems are largely irrelevant, because they are deemed not to be all that deeply-held. In such an academic community there is the primary assumption that we live broadly in a secular world, and if we do not, then religion or theology should be a purely private matter – a case for personal choice rather than institutional concern. And we can all agree to disagree in an unconstrained, liberal-ironic manner.

The modern pre-liberal university and "constrained agreement"

However, this is a very modern, indeed a very postmodern view. By contrast, in pre-modern and modern pre-liberal universities, there was a clear sense of "*constrained agreement*", because everyone in the university broadly agreed about the fundamental importance of theology and the existence of that strange quasi-Greek and Jewish entity called God, even though they may well have disagreed about the finer points of God's existence and/or nature, and the actual means by which these were to be investigated. But no-one, or almost no-one, questioned or doubted the validating principle of the cosmos – God – and few had

the temerity or even the desire to question the social order which was tasked with articulating that validating principle – namely, the church *universalis*. Everything was subordinated to God, and all intellectual life was subordinated to God's representatives on earth – the Church. Hence, the proper study for humanity was God, as nothing else could be seriously understood unless God was first acknowledged. At least, this was the case for Augustine and the Augustinian order. It is a view derived from the Platonic tradition – a glimpse first of the Good would provide the starting point for understanding things-in-themselves (that is, reality), as opposed to things-not-fully-themselves (that is, appearance). Aquinas, the other great philosopher-theologian and textbook-writer for the medieval university, adopted a slightly more liberal view, one taken from Aristotle rather than from Plato. For Aquinas, as for Aristotle, we could study, learn and understand a great deal about this world and its inhabitants by the systematic observation and recording of the multiple 'facts' about us. This is the scientific or empirical approach, as opposed to the purely rationalist and idealist approach favoured by Plato and Augustine. For Aquinas we should largely trust the five senses to tell us something accurate about the world, and then reflect in a reasoned fashion upon such facts and recordings. Only later might we come to realize and appreciate the worth of moving from a study of the world to the study of God. Indeed the serious study of this world naturally and logically leads us to study the ultimate origin and meaning of this world, namely that entity for which the word "God" is shorthand. So, for Augustine, start with God and end with the world, whereas for Aquinas, start with the world and end with God, the *alpha* and *omega* of the intellectual and cultural life of the medieval and post-medieval world. It is no wonder then that there was such "*constrained agreement*" about the proper construction and scope of the curriculum in the founding centuries of the great universities of Europe.

It took a number of radical thinkers to bring that constrained agreement to a close. Galileo and Descartes began the revolution, and Descartes' famous assertion 'I think therefore I am' [vi] heralded in a new form of individualized inquiry which starts with the single thinking person, rather than with the supposed existence of an omniscient and omnipotent architect of the world and humankind, or with the dogmatic doctors of the Catholic church. This form of epistemological individualism eventually led to Kant's great revolution in intellectual thought, after which God was recast as an intellectual concept, rather than as a living substance.

With Kant, the standard bearer of the European Enlightenment movement, we start the slow process towards "*unconstrained agreement*". Agreement was no longer constrained by any kind of over-arching principle, and rival and competing disciplines sought to make their claim upon the intellectual enterprise of university life. Competing traditions, modes of inquiry, both secular and religious, and competing modes of institutional governance all proliferated. And as no one could secure any firm agreement, constrained or otherwise, on anything, unconstrained agreement to differ was all that was required, As a consequence, monks no longer dominated the cloisters and studies; and academics of all creeds and none began to shape the new and evolving institutions,

Once religion had been relegated to the chapel only, and once a realm of transcendent value had been confined to the private study, it ushered in an era of "*unconstrained agreement*", because no-one needed constraining; any actual disagreements were bound to be perpetual and largely of little consequence so long as financial and academic preferment governed the institutions. And along with the inexorable rise of the '"bureaucratic manager" in general culture, (MacIntyre 1985:73-77; 107-08) the rise of the academic manager has replaced that of the scholar-monk. It is no wonder that the great theology faculties have now been supplanted by the towering and newly-resplendent faculties of business and management. The death of one god simply meant the birth of another. Or rather the abandonment of a monotheistic concern with God has

led to the polytheistic concerns of many gods: wealth, status, utility, efficiency, and so on. The new priesthood comprises economists, technologists, scientists, and strangely, and for very different reasons, postmodernists.

A possibility: a university of "constrained disagreement" and the nature of conflict

It is hardly surprising then that institutions of higher education, namely universities and university colleges are in a state of some crisis. Many if not most have lost their nerve in the face of financial pressures, bureaucratic interference, political pleading, league tables, quality audits and so on. The overarching aims of the university as once they were known, articulated and embodied have all but been forgotten. What then is to be done, in the absence of any clear understanding of the moral and intellectual purposes of a university? MacIntyre provides us with an answer, although it is by no means the only one:

> What … is possible? The answer is: the university as a place of constrained disagreement. Of imposed participation in conflict, in which a central responsibility of higher education would be to initiate students into conflict (MacIntyre 1990:231).

But conflicts about what exactly? Conflicts of a curricular kind certainly, and conflicts about the precise aims and purposes of a university education. As the Australian philosopher, John Anderson, once claimed, we should not "ask of a social institution: 'What end or purpose does it serve?' but rather, 'Of what conflicts is it the scene?'" (source: MacIntyre 1985:163). And what outcomes are the result of such conflicts? The contemporary academic may, in curricular terms accept the previously hinted-at postmodern view: that actually, despite the conflicts, it doesn't matter too much if we abandon philosophy, history and geography,

for none of them have any more educational legitimacy than urban planning, enterprise studies, and marketing. There is nothing which ultimately distinguishes one subject from another, except, perhaps, popularity. But interestingly, whilst subscribing to the postmodernist view in curricular terms, the contemporary academic often subscribes to a bureaucratic and managerialist view in organizational terms: there is a single, uniform structure and mode of operation that "optimises" learning, teaching and assessment. Hence, the search for systems, usually of a technological and technical kind that will normalize academic behaviour and inquiry, and provide universal and objective means of measuring performance, output and standards.

For MacIntyre, however, there is an intellectual tradition which recognizes that world views and modes of intellectual inquiry will always be in competition and sometimes in conflict, but that nonetheless, this particular tradition has withstood external critique, accommodated new insights from alternative traditions, and has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and modes of inquiry which allow its adherents, "those who have thought their way through topics of justice and practical rationality, from the standpoint constructed by and in the direction pointed out first by Aristotle and then by Aquinas, … every reason at least so far to hold that the rationality of their tradition has been confirmed in its encounters with other traditions …" (MacIntyre 1988: 402-03). That tradition is Thomist (after Thomas Aquinas), the ongoing synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies (still providing the fundamental fault-line in western intellectual culture), through the philosophical theologies of Augustine and Aquinas respectively. It is Thomist on the grounds that, (as we have already seen), the Aristotle-Aquinas position encourages substantial secular inquiry before finally acknowledging the fact that the human perspective is, and always will be, restricted, finite, incomplete and imperfect, but that, it is still worth trying to excavate a realm of knowledge, value and meaning that may well lie beyond our straightforward material understanding. Moreover, it is a realm of meaning that cannot simply be

dismissed as a form of faith requiring no reason, but a form of reason that finally understands the importance of faith – not a literal faith concerned with supernatural explanations, but one that acknowledges the fact that all of the great world-faith traditions embody a set of symbolic truths about the human condition. It is this philosophical Thomist tradition that seemed, broadly, to have informed the high Anglican belief system of the aforementioned Revd. Derwent Coleridge, the first Principal of St Mark's College.

To return, these conflicts, into which students should be initiated, provide the deeper foundations for the present set of conflicts that characterize, to a greater or lesser degree, all institutions charged with the responsibility of educating the individual and collective student. And what kinds of conflicts might there be? We have hinted at them already. They are, to a degree, the same for all contemporary centres of learning and teaching. The conflicts between the secular and the religious in intellectual life, between the liberal and vocational (broadly conceived on the one hand, and narrowly conceived on the other) in the curriculum offered; between the managerial and the collegial in the organizational structure, and the academic and the commercial in terms of the overall value conferred upon a university education.

But there are additional conflicts both between and within the multifarious disciplines governing intellectual life. Newman, Leavis and O'Hear speak eloquently of the competing values accorded to, say, literature and philosophy, science and medicine. What, in a university, must be admitted, and what can be discarded? And even within disciplines, as everyone knows, there are rival positions, exemplified by the ongoing and unedifying dispute in philosophy between the continental phenomenological, and the Anglo-American analytic traditions (Glendinning 2006:9-17; 69-84). Often such disputes emerge from the biographies of individual scholars which intersect with the histories of institutions, coupled with the fashionable successes of individual disciplines.

Having said all of this, can Newman's original vision be strengthened at all? Indeed, has it fallen so far out of fashion that it can no longer be resurrected? The prospect looks rather bleak, although MacIntyre has pointed out that the vast theoretical and practical resources laid down by Greek and Roman culture were maintained and cherished by the Catholic church in its newly-established monasteries, whilst the assorted tribes of Goths and Vandals laid waste to life, love and learning beyond their walls. And as he later claims,

> What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are upon us. And if the tradition of the virtues was able to survive the horrors of the last dark ages, we are not entirely without grounds for hope. This time, however, the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time. (MacIntyre 1985:263)

Specifically in relation to the contemporary university, Bill Readings has undertaken a similar analysis, and reaches a similar conclusion: we desperately need new academic communities wedded to a mode of thought and action largely unhampered by the current *Weltanschauung* of utilitarian goals, managerial systems, and shallow league tables derived from misrepresented statistics. There are possibilities, but if they are not explored, then the university may well remain "in ruins" (Readings 1997).

But, a word of caution: we should not be too pessimistic or we would rightly be judged as being solely backward-looking, guilty of the worst form of conservatism, instead of attempting to be forward-looking, adopting the acceptable face of pragmatism. Whatever else a university is, or whatever else it has become, it does at least provide some kind of a contested forum for an educated public, and a locus for a community of inquirers. And postmodernity, whatever its problems, can often provide the practical as well as the theoretical means for the strengthening of the university as a place of constrained disagreement, albeit perhaps

unintentionally. Otherwise, presumably, a somewhat gloomy piece such as this (quite apart from its many technical faults) would have failed even to have seen the light of day.

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[i] The book grew out of a series of lectures or 'discourses' given by Newman, first, upon being asked to fashion the principles and curriculum for a Catholic University in Dublin in 1852, and second, after being appointed to the Rectorship at Dublin 1854-58.

[ii] It is generally agreed that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is probably one of the most profound and influential texts in the history of moral philosophy, and is as relevant today as it was two millennia ago.

[iii] This is MacIntyre's (1985 : 148) translation of the Greek *eudaimonia* which is often (mis)translated as simply 'happiness'.

[iv] For a short and exceptionally readable account of the central importance to western culture of this text see Blackburn (2006).

[v] For a full treatment of the development of the medieval university, and the relationship between theology and philosophy within it, see, for example, Gilson (1955: 246-250); Taylor (1966: 408-425), and Evans (1993).

[vi] 'I think, therefore I am' is the well known formulation found in *Discourse on Method* (1968:53), whereas the expanded and more formalised version is to be found in the famous *Second Meditation*, 'I am, I exist, is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind'(1968 : 103).